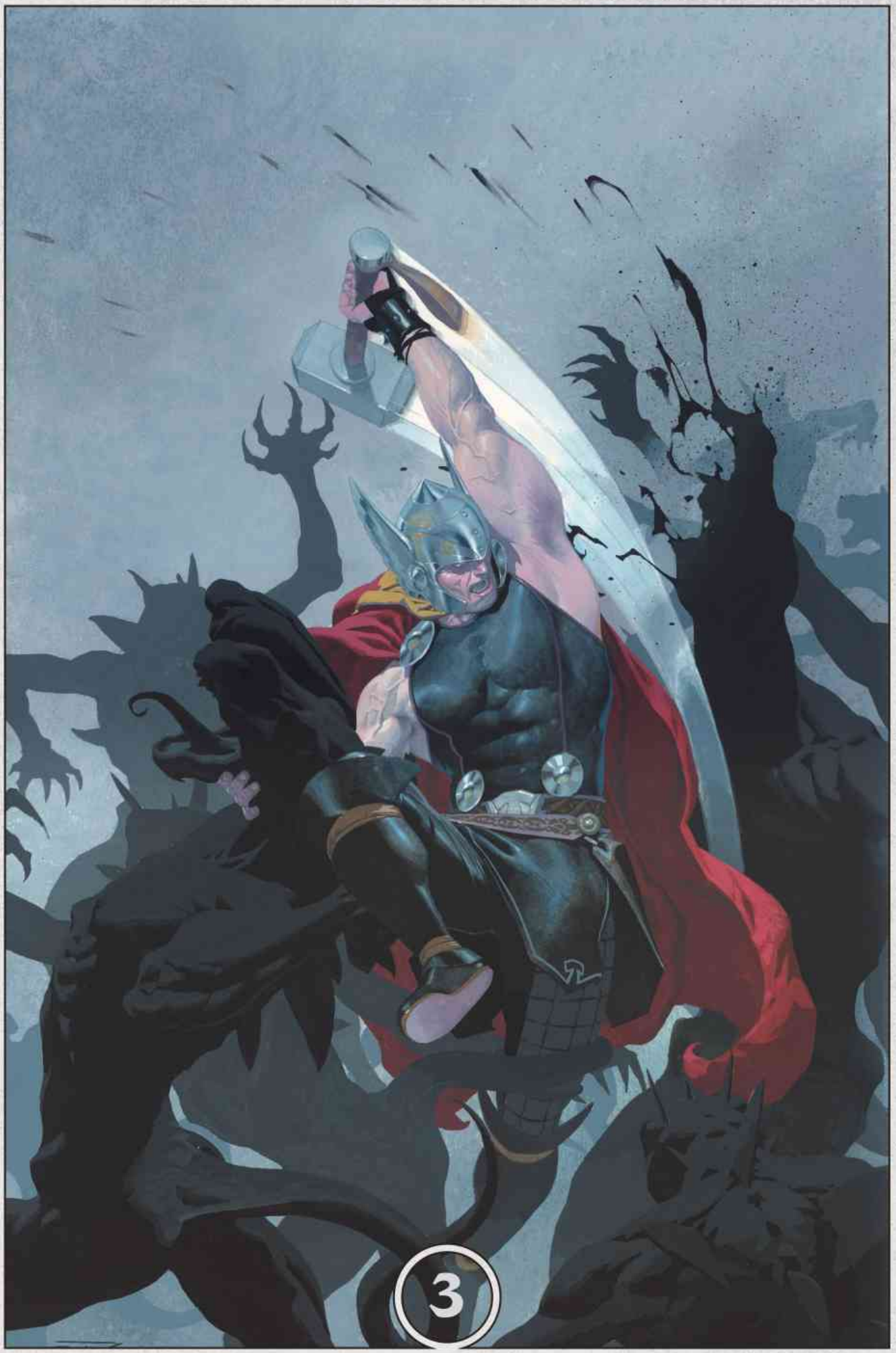
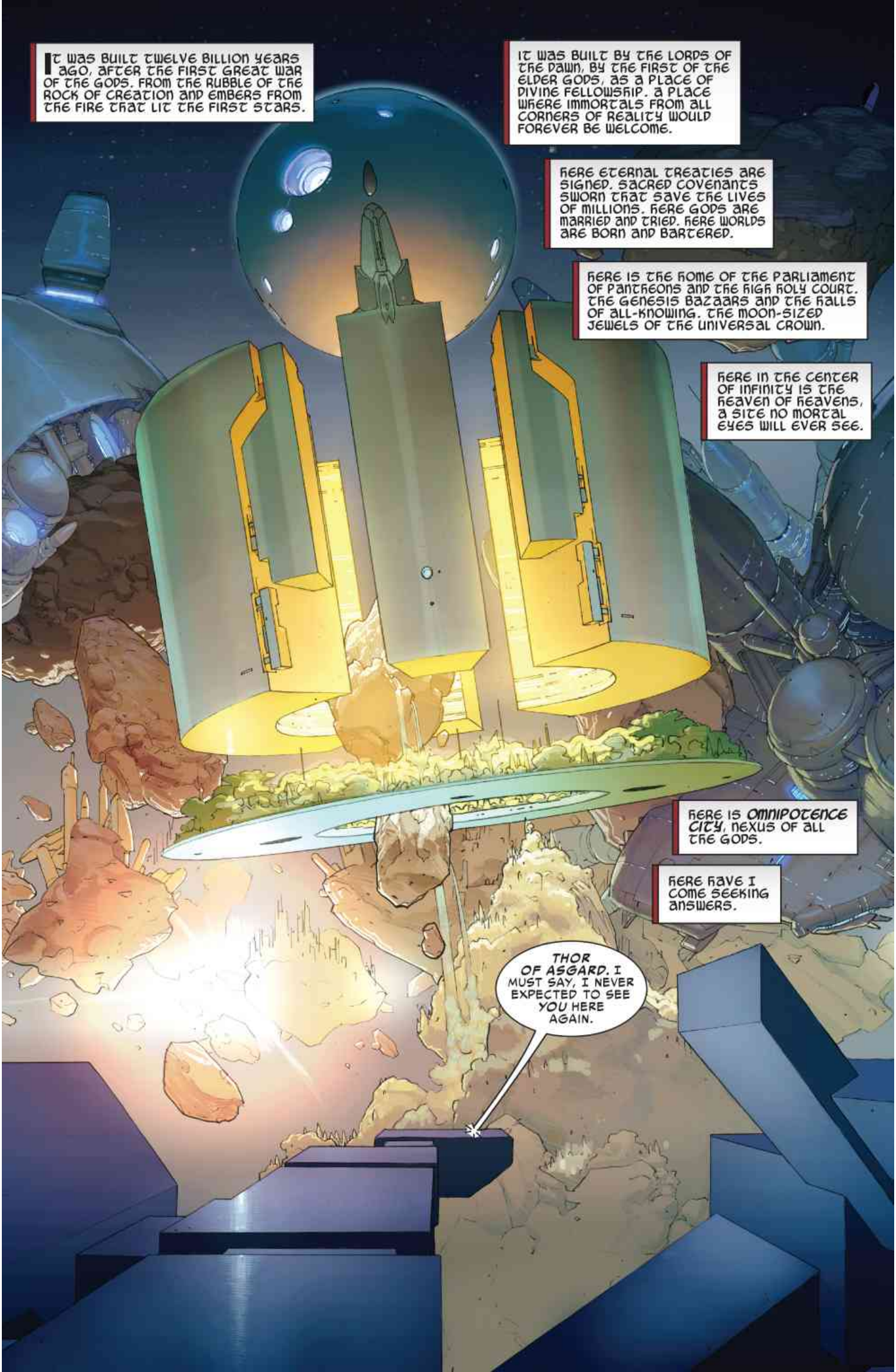
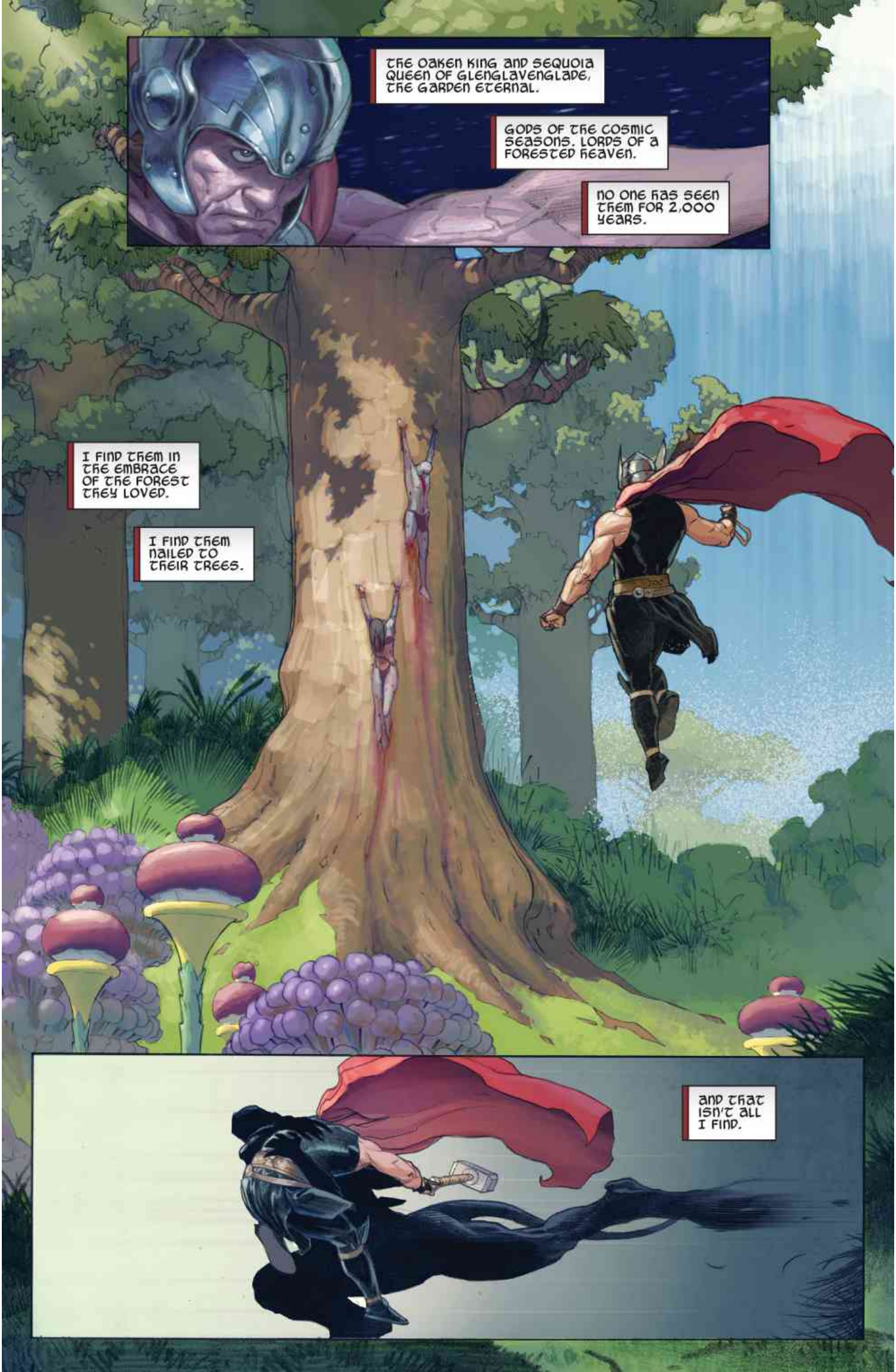


The Hall of the Lost


It was built twelve billion years ago, after the first great war of the gods. From the rubble of the rock of creation and embers from the fire that lit the first stars.
It was built by the lords of the dawn, by the first of the elder gods, as a place of divine fellowship. A place where immortals from all corners of reality would forever be welcome.
Here eternal treaties are signed. Sacred covenants sworn that save the lives of millions. Here gods are married and tried. Here worlds are born and bartered.
Here is the home of the parliament of pantheons and the high holy court. The genesis bazaars and the halls of all-knowing. The moon-sized jewels of the universal crown.
Here in the center of infinity is the heaven of heavens, a site no mortal eyes will ever see.
Here is *omnipotence city*, nexus of all the gods.
Here have I come seeking answers.
Thor of Asgard. I must say, I never expected to see *you* here again.

YOU WERE JUST A BOY ON YOUR LAST VISIT TO THE HALLS OF ALL-KNOWING. BROUGHT HERE BY YOUR FATHER TO STUDY THE OLD GODS, ALONG WITH THAT EQUALLY CHARMING BROTHER OF YOURS.
I MUST SAY, YOU NEVER STRUCK ME AS SOMEONE WITH A GREAT DEAL OF READING IN HIS FUTURE.
MY LORD LIBRARIAN...
THOUGH YOU DID STRIKE ME IN OTHER WAYS. SEVERAL TIMES ABOUT THE LEGS AND HINDQUARTERS, FROM WHAT I REMEMBER.
MY LORD, I DO APOLOGIZE FOR THE FOLLY OF MY YOUTH, BUT PLEASE, I COME NOW SEEKING KNOWLEDGE.
KNOWLEDGE? OH MY, HOW EXCITING. AND WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO WE HAVE IN THESE DUSTY OLD HALLS THAT COULD POSSIBLY BE OF INTEREST TO THE GREAT THOR OF ASGARD?
WE HAVE NO HALL OF BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, I'M AFRAID. NOR HALL OF THUNDER, UNLESS YOU COUNT THE LAVATORY WHEN THERE ARE TROLL GODS ABOUT.
PERHAPS THE HALL OF WAR. THERE ARE SEVERAL MENTIONS OF YOUR FATHER THERE, AFTER ALL, THOUGH MOST ARE NOT EXACTLY OF THE FLATTERING VARIETY.
I SEEK THE NAMES OF GODS WHO HAVEN'T BEEN SEEN IN YEARS. WHO SIMPLY DISAPPEARED.
AH. WELL, IN THAT CASE, IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU, PRINCE OF ASGARD...
TO THE HALL OF THE LOST.

THE HALL OF THE LOST? DO YOU MEAN TO TELL ME, EACH OF THESE BOOKS AND SCROLLS... REPRESENTS A GOD WHO IS *MISSING?*
GODS WHO ARE INACTIVE, YES. WHO'S TO SAY IF THEY'VE ACTUALLY BEEN MISSED OR NOT?
THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE. WHY HASN'T ANYONE BEEN ALARMED BY THIS?
GODS COME AND GO, SON OF ODIN. SUCH IS THE WAY OF THINGS. AND ONE GROUP NEVER MUCH CARES WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE OTHER. WHY SOMEDAY EVEN THE GREAT THOR HIMSELF MAY BE FORGOTTEN.
LET US HOPE SO AT LEAST.
THESE GODS DID NOT SIMPLY FADE AWAY. THEY WERE *MURDERED.*
IF IT'S THE HALL OF MURDER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, IT'S DOWN THE OTHER WAY. YOU'LL LOVE IT. THERE'S AN ENTIRE WING DEVOTED TO YOUR FAMILY.
I HAVE TO SEE THE *PARLIAMENT.* I HAVE TO WARN THE PANTHEONS.
WELL, BEST SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST RIGHT AWAY. LAST I HEARD, THERE'S A 200-YEAR WAITING LIST TO SEE THE PARLIAMENT.
AND BEFORE YOU ASK, *NO,* YOU MAY NOT WAIT HERE.
SO MANY. I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START. COULD ALL OF THESE GODS REALLY HAVE BEEN MURDERED BY ONE MAN?
I SUPPOSE THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.


THE OAKEN KING AND SEQUOIA QUEEN OF GLENGLAVENGLADE, THE GARDEN ETERNAL.
GODS OF THE COSMIC SEASONS. LORDS OF A FORESTED HEAVEN.
NO ONE HAS SEEN THEM FOR 2,000 YEARS.
I FIND THEM IN THE EMBRACE OF THE FOREST THEY LOVED.
I FIND THEM NAILED TO THEIR TREES.
AND THAT ISN'T ALL I FIND.

THE WAR FAERIES OF WENDIGORGE, THE NINE GUARDIANS OF THE HORNWOLD.
IT'S SAID THEY LIVED IN A PALACE WITH CARAMELIZED WALLS, IN A VALLEY WHERE THE SKIES RAINED MILK AND THE TREES OOZED HONEY.
THEY WERE LAST SEEN 1,200 YEARS AGO.
THESE DAYS THE TREES ARE STRUNG WITH GORE AND THE AIR IS BLACK WITH FLIES.
AND WHEN IT RAINS ONLY MAGGOTS FALL FROM THE SKY.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO BURY OR BURN THEM. NOT WHILE HE'S STILL OUT THERE.
NO TIME TO DO ANYTHING BUT FOLLOW HIS BLOODY TRAIL.

THE CORAL IMMORTALS OF CATARACT. THE WALKERS OF THE OUTER VOID. THE LAST OF THE LAVA COLOSSI.
VOORD BLOODEYE, THE BABOON GOD OF BEHEADINGS. ZORR'KIRI, THE SKRULL GODDESS OF LOVE. YUG-SLUGGOTH THE UNSEEABLE, BARON OF THE ELDER HELL.
ALL GODS WHO'VE BEEN MISSING FOR 500 YEARS. ALL MISSING NO LONGER.
SKLOTCH
I FIND GOD AFTER GOD DEAD AND ROTTING. SOME ALONE. SOME IN PILES SO LARGE I CAN SEE THEM FROM SPACE.
AR

EACH BOOK FROM THE FALL OF THE LOST LEADS ME TO MORE CARNAGE. MORE EYELESS ATTACK DOGS. BUT NO GOD BUTCHER.

THERE'S NO PATTERN TO HIS SPREE. FOR 2,000 YEARS HE HAS SIMPLY CRISSCROSSED CREATION, KILLING ANYTHING IMMORTAL HE FINDS.
WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT THE GODS IN THIS UNIVERSE THAT NO ONE HAS EVER EVEN *NOTICED* OR CARED?
WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT *ME*?

I KNEW THIS GOD.
FALLIGAR THE BEHEMOTH. A PATRON GOD OF THE GALACTIC FRONTIER. CHAMPION OF THE TOURNAMENT OF IMMORTALS FOR FIVE CENTURIES STRAIGHT. THEY SAY HE WRESTLED BLACK HOLES JUST FOR FUN.
I LAST SAW HIM BARELY A HUNDRED YEARS AGO. WE PASSED ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPACEWAYS AND WAVED.
HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR FIVE YEARS, SAY HIS MOURNERS, THE WORSHIPPERS WHO COME EVERY DAY TO KNEEL IN HIS OFFAL AND PRAY FOR RESURRECTION.
YET NOTHING STIRS WITHIN THIS GIANT ROTTING HUSK.
NOTHING TRULY ALIVE, AT LEAST.
THIS IS MY FAULT. THIS GOD AND ALL THE OTHERS DIED BECAUSE OF MY FOOLISHNESS.
BUT NO MORE. SO SWEARS THE GOD OF THUNDER.
FA
KROOOM
NO MORE!

YES, KEEP COMING, YOU MINDLESS BEAST! LET US SEND A MESSAGE TO YOUR MASTER!
THOR
WHEREVER YOU ARE, IN WHATEVER DISTANT SHADOW YOU COWER AND HIDE...I HOPE YOU FEEL THIS, BUTCHER OF GODS.
I HOPE THESE THINGS ARE A PART OF YOU AND THAT YOU FEEL EVERY SECOND OF ME BEATING THEM TO A BLACKENED PULP.
I HOPE YOU FEEL IT AND KNOW, DOWN DEEP IN YOUR WRETCHED, YELLOW BONES...
THAT YOUR END IS NEAR.

GOD BUTCHER! Can you HEAR me?!
How many more of your dogs must I dismember before you come out and FACE me, you coward?!

You want to kill gods?! Well here stands the God of Thunder! COME KILL ME, you worm!
Come kill THOR if you dare!

GOD BUTCHER!
I scream until my throat is raw. Until they hear the rumble of thunder from worlds away.
The hammer hangs heavy in my hand. But I cannot stop. I will not stop.
Not until I find him. Not until my hands are about his throat and I can look into his eyes and see for myself his REGRET...

OVER EVER HAVING LEFT ME ALIVE.
WHA--?! WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S THE GOD BUTCHER?
DID I KILL HIM?
I'M SORRY, MY LORD, BUT WE FOUND ONLY YOU. LYING IN THE SNOW, NOT FAR FROM WHERE WE ROUTED THE SLAVS. YOUR WOUNDS WERE...
ANYONE BUT THE GOD OF THUNDER WOULD HAVE DIED A THOUSAND TIMES OVER.
YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP FOR SEVEN DAYS. WE DARED NOT MOVE YOU FAR FROM WHERE YOU FELL. NOT THAT WE COULD HAVE EVEN IF WE'D WANTED TO. IT TOOK FOUR OF US JUST TO LIFT YOUR AXE.
WE'VE PRAYED EVERY NIGHT FOR YOUR FATHER'S AID AND GUIDANCE, BUT AS OF YET, THE ALL-FATHER HASN'T SEEN FIT TO HEAR US.
BRING ME MEAT.
AND MEAD.
AND THEN MY AXE.

893 AD.
Along The Banks of The Neva River,
In What Will Someday Be Called Russia.
WHOEVER DARED ATTACK YOU KNOWS NOT WHAT MANNER OF GOD THEY TRIFLE WITH, DO THEY, MY LORD? I CANNOT WAIT TO SEE YOU CALL DOWN THE RAGE OF YOUR FATHER AND ALL OF YOUR WONDROUS FRIENDS UPON THEM.
THE ARMIES OF ASGARD WILL MARCH THIS DAY!

Hours Later,
ARE YOU...ARE YOU THE NORSE GOD CALLED THOR?
WHO ASKS?
I AM...I WAS HINKON, SIBERIAN GOD OF THE HUNT. THE BLACK BUTCHER...HE SAID TO TELL YOU, HE WAITS FOR YOU IN HIS CAVE, ALONG THE LAKE. JUST FOLLOW THE SCREAMS.
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE COME ALONE.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE IN MUCH OF A POSITION TO OFFER ADVICE IN MATTERS OF COMBAT, HINKON, GOD OF THE HUNT.
TRUE. SO TRUE. HE CAME AT ME OUT OF THE DARKNESS, THE SHADOWS THEMSELVES WERE ALIVE AROUND HIM. IF I HAD NOT BEEN SO DRUNK, PERHAPS...
THERE IS NO HONOR IN THE WAY THE GOD BUTCHER FIGHTS. NOR WILL I GRANT HIM HONOR IN HIS DEATH. YOU HAVE THE WORD OF THOR ON THAT.
PLEASE, THOR...BEFORE YOU GO...
YES, OF COURSE.
BE AT PEACE NOW, HINKON. THE HUNT FOR YOU HAS ENDED.

"WHILE FOR THOR IT HAS JUST BEGUN."
The Present Day,
The Shores of Lake Ladoga,
Russia.
MY SATELLITES ARE TRIANGULATING, BASED ON THE ROUGH COORDINATES YOU GAVE ME. SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU SOON.
THIS ISN'T ANOTHER VIKING STRIP CLUB, IS IT? BECAUSE I HAD TO BURN A WHOLE SUIT OF ARMOR AFTER THAT LAST ONE.
WE'RE CLOSE. THIS IS STARTING TO LOOK FAMILIAR.
YEAH, I'M SCANNING THE GEOLOGY. LOOKS LIKE OUR TARGET SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE OVER...
THERE. IS THAT THE CAVE?
THAT IS IT.
SEEMS PRETTY QUIET. YOU SURE THIS IS THE PLACE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR? LOTTA CAVES AROUND THESE PARTS. WHEN WERE YOU LAST HERE?
FWOOOOOM
1,000 YEARS AGO. GIVE OR TAKE A FEW.
AH. RIGHT. THIS IS THAT SORT OF BUSINESS.
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP, STARK. BUT FROM HERE, I MUST GO ON ALONE.

UM. I KNOW IT'S PROBABLY NONE OF MY BUSINESS, BUT WHEN HAVE I EVER LET THAT STOP ME BEFORE? I HAVE TO TELL YA, BIG GUY, THE LOOK IN YOUR EYES RIGHT NOW IS REALLY FREAKING ME OUT. I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU THIS *UNNERVED* BEFORE.
WHAT THE HELL *HAPPENED* TO YOU IN THAT CAVE?
YOU SURE YOU DON'T NEED THE *AVENGERS* WITH YOU ON THIS ONE?
STARK...
STARK, WAIT.
RIGHT. GOD BUSINESS. I GOT IT. IT'S OKAY, I'VE GOT PLENTY OF BORING OLD MORTAL PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH. I'LL BE ON THE MOON IF YOU NEED ME.
ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, I CAME TO THIS PLACE *ALONE*. OUT OF STUBBORN PRIDE. AND I NEVER TOLD ANOTHER LIVING SOUL WHAT HAPPENED TO ME HERE.
NOW GODS ARE DYING BECAUSE OF MY SILENCE, BECAUSE OF MY FOOLISHNESS. I CANNOT MAKE THAT SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.
YOU ARE AS MUCH A GOD AS ANY IMMORTAL I HAVE EVER KNOWN, TONY STARK. PLEASE...I COULD USE YOUR HELP.
I TELL IRON MAN WHAT I KNOW AND SEND HIM TO OLYMPUS TO BEGIN WARNING THE GODS OF EARTH.
MY SEARCH FOR THE GOD BUTCHER HAS LED ME NOWHERE. NO CLUES WHERE HE MIGHT BE HIDING. NO IDEA WHERE HE MIGHT STRIKE NEXT.
SO WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN, I AM HERE.
A PLACE I HAD HOPED *NEVER* TO SEE AGAIN.

I am a *YOUNG* god, as my father always likes to remind me. But compared to my mortal friends, I have lived a very long time.

There are thousands of years worth of memories rattling around inside my head. Even in the mind of a god, there isn't room for everything.

BOOM

Memories evaporate over time. Such is the price of being immortal. Of much of my distant past, I can recall only fragments and glimpses. Some moments are gone completely.

I've forgotten the face of the first maiden I kissed. Of the first troll I felled or dragon I tamed.

I've forgotten the first star I walked upon and the sight of my father smiling.

For a god, the lives of mortals seem to pass by in the blink of an eye. Which leaves much of my early time on Midgard an irreparable haze.

There are mortal women I know I've loved and men I've stood by in battle who I'm ashamed to say I can no longer recall.

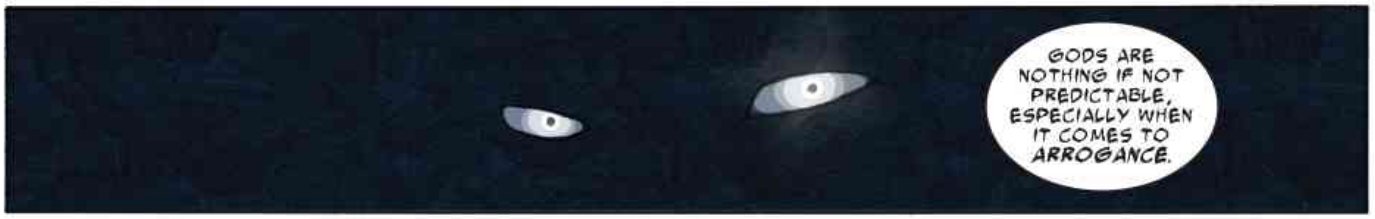
But this *cave...*

This cave I will remember 'til the end of time.

THIS IS WHERE THE GOD BUTCHER TAUGHT ME FEAR.
ALL-MOTHER? ALL-MOTHER, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
DAMN THESE SUMMONING STONES.
QUEEN FREYJA! THE GOD OF THUNDER WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH THEE!
THIS IS WHERE HE SHOWED ME THE TRUE DEPTHS OF HIS HORROR.
THOR? MY BOY, IS THAT YOU? YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEAK UP. THE CONGRESS IS MEETING AND YOU KNOW HOW DWARVES GET WHEN THEY'RE ANGRY.
MY QUEEN, ASGARDIA AND EVERYONE IN IT IS IN DANGER!
THIS IS WHERE I NEARLY DIED AT HIS HANDS.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HAVE YOU GOTTEN INTO TROUBLE AGAIN? PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOUR BROTHER'S INVOLVED.
QUEEN FREYJA, LISTEN TO ME, YOU HAVE TO CALL EVERY ASGARDIAN HOME AND LOCK THE GATES BEHIND THEM! ANYONE OF IMMORTAL BLOOD IS UNDER THREAT!
THOR, WHAT'S HAPPENED? UNDER THREAT BY WHO?
THOR?
KRIK
THIS IS WHERE I THOUGHT I KILLED HIM.
RRRRRRCHH!!!

GOD BUTCHER!
COME OUT OF YOUR HOLE AND LET'S FINISH WHAT WE STARTED!

YOU CAME ALONE. I KNEW YOU WOULD.


GODS ARE NOTHING IF NOT PREDICTABLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO ARROGANCE.

RRRRGH!
AFTER OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, YOU SHOULD HAVE REALIZED HOW LUCKY YOU WERE TO SURVIVE AND FLED TO THE OTHER END OF THE COSMOS. NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE SAVED YOU IN THE END.
BUT PERHAPS BY THE TIME I FOUND YOU AGAIN, I WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW YOU HURT ME AND GIVEN YOU A QUICK DEATH.

AND YOU DARE CALL ME ARROGANT! RRRRGH!!!
NOW THERE WILL BE NOTHING QUICK ABOUT THE WAY YOU DIE, GOD OF THUNDER.
INSTEAD, YOUR SUFFERING WILL SEEM AS IF IT LASTS...

"UNTIL THE VERY END OF TIME."
AARGHH!!!
NO!!! I WILL NOT FALL AGAIN! NOT TO YOU!
NO MATTER HOW MANY OF YOUR BLACK BERSERKERS YOU SEND TO SULLY ASGARD!
DO YOU HEAR ME, GOD BUTCHER?! THOR WILL NOT FALL!
THOR WILL NEVER...

GOD BUTCHER!
NO MORE RUNNING! TIME TO FINISH--
WAIT!

PLEASE DON'T HURT ME! I'M NOT HIM!
I'M NOT GORR!

WHO ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU IN THIS CAVE?
HIDING FROM HIM. HIDING IN THE LAST PLACE HE WOULD EVER LOOK. DON'T YOU REMEMBER? DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT THIS PLACE IS?
EVERYTHING HE'S DOING NOW, IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THIS CAVE AND WHAT YOU DID TO HIM HERE.

IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU, THOR.
GODS ARE DYING RIGHT NOW BECAUSE OF YOU.

GGaaaRRGhh!!!
SCREAMING. YES. THERE WILL BE MUCH MORE OF THAT BEFORE YOU DIE.
ALL GODS WILL SCREAM BY THE TIME I AM THROUGH.

"DOWN TO THE VERY LAST ONE."